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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE IN AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

1. The last report on the preparation of the programme for the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (UNTACDA II) was contained in document E/ECA/CM.17/13 of March 1991 and covered activities up to April 1991.

2. The activities and progress reported in this report cover the period from May 1991. These activities include:

(a) Preparation and launching of the programme:

(i) extraordinary meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, May 1991;

(ii) ECA Conference of Ministers, May 1991;

(iii) Economic and Social Council, July/August 1991;

(iv) transport symposium and donors technical meeting;

(v) United Nations General Assembly, December 1991;

(b) Four meetings of the Resource Mobilization Committee (RMC) in June, October, November 1991 and January 1992 to:

(i) finalize the list of projects according to the decision of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning of May 1991;

(ii) prepare for the Brussels donors technical meeting, and symposium;

(iii) review the outcome of the symposium and donors technical meeting and plan follow-up action; and

(iv) finalize action programme for programme implementation phase.

3. A summary of the outcome of the above activities is given below.

I. EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

4. An extraordinary meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning was held in Addis Ababa on 7 and 8 May 1991. It was preceded by meetings of the Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (IACC) and the Intergovernmental Experts on Transport and Communications.

5. The Conference took major decisions relating to the scope and timing of activities of the UNTACDA II programme. Some of these relate to the re-affirmation of the order of priority of the programme, namely that:

(a) Regional and subregional integration projects are accorded highest priority;

(b) National projects with an integrative scope are next in priority; and

(c) Purely national projects are of third priority.

6. The Conference endorsed the following activities for the RMC:

(a) Hold a meeting in June or July 1991 to reconsider pending and missing projects for which additional information was provided;

(b) Empowerment of the RMC to include in the Decade programme those pending and omitted projects which met the selection criteria;

(c) Regular meetings of the RMC during the next two years to consider new projects submitted in accordance with approved guidelines. Heads of subregional and subsectoral working groups and the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Experts would be invited;

(d) A technical meeting of donors to be convened by the RMC within six months, at which the means of financing the programme would be discussed with donors and financing institutions;

(e) ECA to organize, in cooperation with members of the IACC, RMC, Chairmen of subregional and subsectoral working groups, meetings and seminars to sensitize African States and intergovernmental organizations on the objectives and strategies of the Decade and help them to realign their strategies (national level sensitization to involve grassroots and rural people);

(f) The ECA Executive Secretary was requested to contact officials of funding agencies members of the RMC to determine the specific involvement of their institutions in the implementation of the programme;

(g) The RMC was to take appropriate measures so that the approved Decade projects could be endorsed by funding agencies, even if such projects were not in structural adjustment programmes (SAPs);

(h) Meeting of regional and subregional institutions and specialized agencies before the next RMC meeting, in order to coordinate and harmonize their programmes.

7. The Conference was concerned about the absence of an industrialization aspect in the programme and adopted a resolution creating an eighth working group of UNTACDA II to prepare the component of the programme dealing with manufacturing of transport and communications equipment.

8. It was noted with concern that many African countries had not yet established their national coordinating committees (NCCs) and the Conference appealed to the States not only to establish but also to support their NCCs to be fully operational.

II. ACTIVITIES IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE MANDATE OF THE CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS AND PLANNING

9. With special reference to paragraph 6 of this report in which a series of activities are mandated by the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communication and Planning, below is a brief account of how these activities have been and are being implemented.

10. The RMC met from 10 to 14 June in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire in compliance with the mandate of the Conference and considered pending and missing projects for which additional information had been provided.

11. At the conclusion of the project screening exercise, taking into account the projects previously screened, a total of 1,127 projects had been examined by the RMC. Of the total number of projects submitted, 819 were for the transport sector and 308 for the communications sector. A total of 669 projects were selected for the first list of programme projects, out of which 478 are transport and 191 are

communications sector projects. Of the 361 pending projects, 271 and 90 are for the transport and communications sectors, respectively, 97 projects were rejected, out of which 70 and 27 were for transport and communications, respectively.

12. In terms of percentages, 73 per cent of the total number of projects initially submitted were in the transport sector, while 27 per cent were in the communications sector. The total approved projects constitute about 59 per cent of the initial submission. The 361 pending and 97 rejected projects represent 32 and 9 per cent respectively of the submission.

13. With regard to paragraph 6(c) above, the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Experts of Transport and Communications and a representative of the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) participated in the RMC meeting in June at which the pending and missing projects were considered. The other subregional intergovernmental organizations, though invited, did not participate. Invitations will be extended by the RMC to the subregional intergovernmental organizations and chairmen of working groups to participate in those RMC meetings devoted to consideration of projects for subsequent inclusion in the programme.

14. In compliance with paragraph 6(d), a symposium and a meeting with donors on African transport and communications were held jointly between 27 and 29 November 1991 at the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) in Brussels. They were jointly organized by the Belgian Royal Academy of Overseas Sciences, the Information Centre and Liaison Office of the United Nations in Brussels, ECA and ACP. The purpose of the symposium was to examine the current challenges facing transport and communications development in Africa and share experiences on the future development of the sector.

15. The meeting with development financing institutions and agencies was organized by the RMC. This Committee, which is chaired by the African Development Bank (ADB), has as members the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the World Bank, the Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ACP and ECA. The main purpose of the meeting was to inform the development financing institutions and agencies about the UNTACDA II programme and discuss possible mechanisms for assisting African countries in its implementation.

16. Over 150 experts participated in the symposium, representing over 50 countries and organizations. The discussions were wide-ranging, covering all aspects of transport and communications development in Africa.

17. Among the major outcomes of the symposium and donors meeting was a confirmation of the importance of transport and communications in Africa's economic development. In this regard, it was recommended that all efforts of African States and their intergovernmental organizations should be coordinated with those of both bilateral donor agencies and multilateral lending institutions so as to focus only on the priority programme. UNTACDA II was accepted as the vehicle for this harmonization.

18. It was generally agreed that maintenance and rehabilitation of African transport and communications infrastructure and equipment as well as human resources development deserved to be accorded the highest priority in the UNTACDA II programme. However, it was also recognized that judicious expansion of infrastructure was necessary for achieving integration and enhancing efficiency of the sector.

19. Regarding human resources, it was agreed that there was need to train Africans who would be capable of developing and managing these sectors. In this regard, it was recommended that every effort should be made to utilize African experts in carrying out studies and other projects during the implementation of UNTACDA II.

20. New ideas were introduced regarding the need to view transport and communications as an economic sector, so that it not only pays for itself, but could also contribute to the national treasury. To do this, it requires that users of transport and communications services should pay for the use of the associated infrastructure. This approach would reduce the financial constraints which result from the current dependence of these sectors on the national treasury for resources required for investment in new infrastructure and its maintenance.

21. The donors meeting endorsed the proposal that the Sub-Saharan African Transport Programme (SSATP) be merged into the UNTACDA II programme in order to rationalize all efforts in African transport and communications development.

22. It was also recommended that a forum on African transport and communications should be organized every two years, at which progress of development in African transport and communications would be reviewed. Senior policy advisers of African countries would have the opportunity to discuss with the financial community policy issues affecting African transport and communications.

23. With specific regard to paragraph 6(e) relating to the sensitization of African States and intergovernmental organizations by the RMC, IACC and ECA and the coordination and harmonization of programmes by regional and subregional institutions, these activities have been planned for 1992 and 1993.

III. LAUNCHING OF THE UNTACDA II PROGRAMME

23. It would be recalled that the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa was proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 43/179 of 20 December 1988. The sequence of legislative activities leading to the launching of the programme have been as follows:

(a) The Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning, in resolution ECA/UNTACDA/Res.91/84 adopted in Abuja, Nigeria on 8 February 1991, recommended the formal launching of the programme;

(b) The ECA Conference of Ministers, in resolution 710 (XXVI) adopted in Addis Ababa on 12 May 1991, endorsed the above resolution and recommended same to ECOSOC;

(c) ECOSOC, in its resolution 191/83 of 26 July 1991, endorsed the ECA Conference of Ministers resolution for the launching of the second Decade and recommended same to the United Nations General Assembly;

(d) In its decision A/C.2/46/L.62 of 26 November 1991 and decision 44/456 of 20 December 1991, the United Nations General Assembly endorsed ECOSOC resolution 1991/83 formally launching the second United Nations Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (1991-2000) and provided some resources for its implementation for the 1992-1993 biennium.

25. In view of the fact that the current General Assembly decision and resources cover only the biennium 1992-1993, ECA shall submit draft resolutions through the usual channels to the General Assembly for funding the implementation of the Decade in the subsequent bienniums.

26. At its eleventh meeting held in Abidjan on 31 January and 1 February 1991, the RMC agreed on the work programme for the implementation phase of the UNTACDA II programme. This programme includes the assignment of tasks and responsibilities to all actors, i.e., countries, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies and financial institutions. The RMC also welcomed the integration of SSATP into UNTACDA II and urged all concerned parties to make every effort to convince other SSATP partners of the importance of efficient implementation of the Decade programme. The need for the

integration into UNTACDA II of all other UNDP-funded transport and communications projects in Africa was stressed and, in this regard, UNDP and ECA were requested to find a viable solution.

27. During this period, a team of consultants carried out an independent evaluation of the preparation of the UNTACDA II programme. The evaluation concluded that the programme was well-prepared but observed that one of its weak points was the fact that NCCs have not yet been established in all countries and some of those established are not fully functional. The evaluation recommended that the successful implementation of the UNTACDA II programme shall largely depend on strengthened and functional NCCs and urged African countries to abide by the decision taken in Tangier regarding the establishment and support of NCCs by each African country.

28. Finally, it should be noted that transport and communications have been identified as one of the priority sectors in the UNDP Fifth Programming Cycle, 1992-1997, which was adopted at the extraordinary meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers in Windhoek, Namibia, in November 1991.

Annex

FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON ECA CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESOLUTION 710 (XXVI) ON THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE IN AFRICA

1. In adopting the above resolution, the ECA Conference of Ministers, in operative paragraph 2, recommended the Decade programme to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the United Nations General Assembly for approval. In accordance with operative paragraph 3, ECOSOC, in its resolution 1991/83 of 26 July 1991, endorsed ECA resolution 710 (XXVI) on the launching of the second Decade programme and recommended same to the General Assembly. The latter, in turn, endorsed the ECOSOC resolution. In formally launching UNTACDA II, the General Assembly also provided ECA with some regular budgetary resources {para. 3(b)} to enable it to carry out its responsibilities as the lead agency for UNTACDA II effectively and efficiently during the 1992-1993 biennium.

2. The request submitted to the General Assembly was for an amount of $US 489,500. These resources under subprogramme 19 of Section 23 of the proposed programme budget would partly cover the costs involved. It would partly be the case for consultants ($18,000), travel of staff ($52,000) and requirements for temporary assistance for meetings ($156,000). The remaining costs, amounting to $263,500 (i.e., $56,000 for consultants, $107,000 for travel of staff and $99,000 for staff costs) represent the additional requirements under Section 23 of the proposed programme budget for the 1992-1993 biennium, to be treated in the context of the guidelines for the operation of the United Nations Contingency Fund. In actual fact, the General Assembly has provided only $263,500. This amount is grossly inadequate for the activities mandated in the resolution.

3. With regard to operative paragraph 4(a), (b) and (c) of resolution 710 (XXVI), the majority of ECA member States have now established national coordinating committees as their instruments of action for implementation of the objectives of UNTACDA II at national level. Their respective governments are now expected to report to the Conference on the functioning of these NCCs such as participating in the implementation of UNTACDA II projects.

4. In response to operative paragraph 5, the secretariat is trying, in various ways "to ensure that adequate manpower and financial resources, regular and extrabudgetary are allocated for harmonizing, coordinating and monitoring the organization and implementation of the Decade programme". The General Assembly's allocation mentioned above is certainly part of these efforts. Furthermore, the 1992-1993 regular work programme of the ECA secretariat has been revised with a view to focusing the work of the ECA regular staff on the implementation of the UNTACDA II programme. In addition, a project document has been submitted to UNDP (para. 6) requesting extrabudgetary resources to enable the secretariat to hire some additional, albeit, temporary staff for the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the programme.

5. The United Nations agencies and other international organizations are working closely with the secretariat, in accordance with operative paragraph 7, mainly as active members of the RMC, the IACC and the subsectoral working groups of UNTACDA II.

6. In order to facilitate the financing of national, subregional and regional Decade projects, in response to the appeal in operative paragraph 8, a meeting was organized with some 25 major financing institutions and agencies on 29 November 1991 at the ACP Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium. The main objective of the meeting was to explain in detail to the participating financing institutions, agencies and donors the UNTACDA II programme and to work out with them a framework of cooperation with the RMC.

7. In general, all the participants supported the UNTACDA II programme. The donor community expressed its readiness to assist Africa to implement the programme. Emphasis was placed on the need to view transport and communications as vital economic sectors which should not only pay for themselves but

also earn revenue for the national budget. In expressing their satisfaction with the UNTACDA II programme, many donor agencies also indicated their intention to collaborate among themselves and with the RMC in financing the UNTACDA II projects.

8. Regarding operative paragraphs 9-13 on establishing a Single Bureau for the Trans-African Highway Authorities, the following steps have been taken:

(a) Draft statutes for the Single Bureau are being prepared for approval by the second Combined Meeting of Intergovernmental Experts on Trans-African Highways to be held in June 1992;

(b) A mechanism for assessing and collecting contributions from the member States to support the Bureau is also under preparation for submission to the same meeting;

(c) Inclusion of the new extended programme for the Trans-African Highways programme in the first phase of UNTACDA II. In this regard, the RMC, of which UNDP is a member, is expected to contribute to the mobilization of resources for its execution.